



## ***FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT FOR WILDLIFE (645)***

### ***Biology Job Sheet # 6***

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - Minnesota**

### **WHAT IS FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT FOR WILDLIFE?**

Forest Stand Improvement for wildlife is a forest management technique used to remove unwanted trees from an area in order to improve timber stand composition. This process opens up the canopy so that more sunlight can reach the ground and results in better herbaceous plant growth in the understory. This results in improved understory plant diversity for wildlife habitat.



### **SPECIFICATIONS:**

- Preserve old growth forest (at least 120 years of age), or defer timber harvest activities to maximize wildlife values.
- Favor hard-mast producers (oak, hickory and walnut) and conifers.
- Identify and preserve important food producing (nuts, berries and seeds) trees and shrubs which are shaded or bordered by less valuable trees.
- Thinning should be done so that the least damage is done to the land and remaining trees.
- Thin to 60% stocking or less to encourage fuller crown development, earlier seed production and heavier herbaceous plant development. **This site should be thinned to \_\_\_\_\_.**
- Leave 7-15 wildlife trees (den/snag) >6 in. dbh per acre as follows:
  - 1-2 trees >18" dbh/acre
  - 2-5 trees >12" dbh/acre
  - 4-8 trees >6" dbh/acre
- Favor trees with vines that will be left as den trees or oak species greater than 10 inches DBH.
- Create 3 to 4 brush piles per acre with material removed during improvement work. Hinged, partially cut "living" brush piles should be included to provide long-lived shelter.

### **MAINTENANCE:**

- Periodic thinning may be necessary to take out dead or diseased trees or to allow more sunlight to reach the ground.
- Thinning should be rotated through a stand so that various stages of plant succession will be established.
- Prescribed burning may be considered to help in encouraging herbaceous plant growth. Burning should only be done under a site specific approved burn plan developed by qualified individuals.

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